

2009 Annual Town Meeting, Article 13, draft of Section "a" – Vincent O'Connor

Whereas, road and sidewalk reconstruction and repair provides decent jobs at above living wage standards; and,

Whereas, decent roads and sidewalks are necessary for the safe operation of all motor vehicles and including public transportation and school buses, and for safe walking and bicycling, and

Whereas, it is estimated that it will take \$15 to \$19 billion over the next twenty years simply to maintain Massachusetts' transportation infrastructure in its present deplorable condition; and,

Whereas, many of Amherst's primary roads and sidewalks, and most of its secondary and tertiary roads are in deteriorated and unsafe condition; and,

Whereas, the condition of Massachusetts roads, bridges, sidewalks, and public transportation funding is the direct result the Commonwealth's acceptance of and/or lack of will to challenge the Reaganomic assertion that taxes are evil; and,

Whereas, an annual increase of 1/2¢/gallon in the Massachusetts gasoline tax from 1991 forward would have prevented the deterioration of Massachusetts' transportation infrastructure and of its funding mechanisms; and,

Whereas, Massachusetts' gasoline tax of 23.5¢/gallon was last increased by x¢ in 1991, when the average price of regular unleaded gasoline was \$1.14/gallon (\$1.45 in K\$) and oil was \$24/barrel; and that tax has, as a consequence, lost 1/3 of its purchasing power while the commodities and services it purchases have escalated in price; and,

Whereas, the Massachusetts House of Representatives voted to designate \$275 million of the \$900 million to be raised by a 1.25¢ increase in the sales tax for transportation purposes – that \$275 million being an amount equivalent to a 10¢ increase in the state's gasoline tax; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Amherst's Representative Town Meeting requests that its state legislators and the leaders of the Massachusetts General Court support, at or near the levels proposed by the Patrick Administration, an increase in the Commonwealth's gasoline tax with the following reservations and conditions:

that in the year when such a gasoline tax increase takes effect, that forward-funding for all regional transit authorities (RTAs) begin and continue on as long as that gasoline tax increase continues to be collected; and

that at least 80% of all gas tax receipts be allocated to the region in which they are collected, which allocation shall include RTAs and bikeways; and,

that 15% of all gas tax receipts be allocated to Chapter 90 aid to cities and towns; and,

that Chapter 81, which used to provide that 7.5% of all gas tax revenues be set allocated to the cities and towns via the Cherry Sheet for the policing and maintenance of local roads be reinstated; and,

that municipal and public transportation vehicle use be exempted entirely from the Massachusetts gasoline tax; and,

Further be it resolved that a copy of this resolution as finally voted by the Amherst Representative Town Meeting be sent by the Town Clerk to Governor Deval Patrick, to Senate President ---, --- to Speaker of the House --- ---, to Senator Stanley Rosenberg, and to Representative Ellen Story